

NSC BRIEFING

23 April 1958

**YUGOSLAV-SOVIET RELATIONS**

- I. The bloc boycott of the Yugoslav party congress in conjunction with the recent Soviet condemnation of the Yugoslav party program is the most serious blow to Yugoslav-Soviet relations since Khrushchev began wooing Yugoslavia in 1955.
  - A. All members of the bloc followed Moscow's lead and withdrew their official delegations.
  - B. Likewise, bloc members appear to be falling into line in support of Moscow's strong rebuttal of the Yugoslav program.
    1. Communist China's Peoples Daily has printed Moscow's attack in full.
    2. Czechs have fully endorsed the Moscow attack, and Bulgaria has initiated its own direct attack on the Yugoslav program.
    3. Poland has associated itself with some of Moscow's criticism, but has recognized Belgrade's right to follow its own road to socialism.
  - C. In lieu of delegations the bloc assigned its ambassadors to the congress as "observers."
    1. With the exception of the Polish ambassador, their refusal to return following a break in the anti-Soviet speech of Rankovich highlighted the Moscow imposed boycott.
- II. On 18 April, the Soviet theoretical journal Kommunist in a detailed analysis of the Yugoslav draft party program condemned as non-Marxist virtually every basic principle of Yugoslav ideology.

A. Kommunist made it clear that unless Yugoslavs non-Marxist views were immediately dropped there is no hope for any future role for Yugoslavia in the Communist world.

B. Moscow gave its condemnation of the Yugoslav program wide coverage in radio broadcasts to foreign audiences.

III. While Tito seriously concerned over the dispute, there is little likelihood that he will knuckle under.

A. Concessions on the main issues would represent an abandonment of the Yugoslav road to socialism.

1. Tito's internal position and his position in history is assured primarily by his "heresies."

2. Past Soviet lecturing to the Yugoslavs has generally served to strengthen the latter in their non-conformity.

B. Aware of Soviet intentions to boycott the congress since 5 April, Belgrade on 17 April announced changes in its draft. Belgrade apparently hoped this would persuade Moscow to attend the congress.

1. These concessions were not on basic ideology, but were an obvious effort to meet Soviet complaints concerning the draft program's foreign policy positions.

2. Yugoslav ambassador Migunovic in Moscow met with Khrushchev but the meeting reportedly terminated in bad feeling as the Yugoslavs probably indicated they could concede nothing further.

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[REDACTED] Migunovic has requested reassignment as a result of his fruitless efforts to achieve a normalization in Yugoslav-

Soviet relations.

- C. Tito in his opening speech at the congress confirmed the Yugoslav road to socialism, but he hurled no fire and brimstone at the USSR, leaving this to his chief lieutenant Rankovic.
  - 1. Rankovic subsequently declared that "certain very responsible people who are our neighbors, instead of profiting from the experiences of the past, are again sharpening the old and rusty weapons of the Cominform."
- IV. The Soviet attack on the Yugoslav program was cast in terms of an ideological schism between Yugoslavia and the bloc. If the Yugoslavs refuse to concede, Yugoslavia will be in ideological isolation to a degree similar to that of 1948.
  - A. Apparently Moscow and Belgrade still hope to avoid complete break as in 1948.
    - 1. The visit of Soviet President Voroshilov to Yugoslavia in May which has not as yet been cancelled, suggests that the USSR hopes to maintain at least "correct" state relations
  - B. Tito still supports most Soviet foreign policy objectives.
    - 1. Tito's speech before the congress noted that Yugoslav-Soviet relations were progressing "very favorably," particularly economic relations.
  - C. The relatively neutral tone of Tito's National Assembly on 19 April speech and several favorable references to the West, however, suggest that Tito may be interested in regaining Western confidence.
    - 1. He praised American aid to which no strings were attached and stated that termination of US military aid had not "negatively influenced" US-Yugoslav relations.

- V. The Yugoslavs are now in rather general isolation.
- A. The visit by Tito to Gomulka scheduled for late spring now assumes considerable significance for Tito's relations with the bloc.
1. The Polish observer at the Yugoslav congress has not acted in concert with his bloc colleagues.
- B. Western Europe's socialist parties have refused to attend the congress largely because of Tito's treatment of Djilas and the more recent trials of several pre-war Yugoslav socialists.
- C. Yugoslavs, nevertheless, are likely to continue to hope that history is on their side (Tito in his October Foreign Affairs article clearly stated this belief) and that ultimately their views will win out without significant modification in the socialist world.